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**Why *Moana* Became *Oceania* –
The Translation of Disney Film Titles in Italy**

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Abstract

In order to discern what patterns emerge in the translation into Italian of film titles produced by the Walt Disney Animation Studios and Pixar Animation Studios, this paper analyzes a corpus of 80 movies whose titles are originally in English. The corpus includes motion pictures released between 1937 and March 2020, and further data was gathered thanks to online film databases such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) and Movieplayer.it. The findings of this study have been divided into two sections: titles in English and titles in Italian, with the latter being the dominant category. The research yielded that the most important factors that distributors take into account to ensure the success of a film title are the target culture and the target audience, and the strategies that have been identified reflect this focus. Despite the rather scarce pieces of research available, title translation remains an interesting field of study that needs to be further developed.

Key words: film title translation, translation tactics, Italian, English, target audience, target culture

1. Introduction

Despite a number of relevant findings published by several scholars (e.g. Nord 1995, Genette 1997, Ross 2013, Bucaria 2020), title translation remains mostly uncharted territory. This paper aims to shed light on the tactics that come into play in the translation of animated children's movies between English and Italian, to delve into the possible reasons why one particular strategy is preferred over another, and finally to prove that title translation is worth the investment of time and money for further research.

The analysis has been carried out on a corpus that includes all the 58 classics created by Walt Disney Animation Studios (from its first animated feature film, 1937's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, to 2019's *Frozen II*) and the 22 feature films produced by the Walt Disney Company subsidiary Pixar Animation Studios (from 1995's *Toy Story* to 2020's *Onward*), for a total of 80 movies whose original title is in English. The list does not include the direct-to-video sequels, for example *Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World*. All the films were distributed in Italy on the big screen (except for *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*, which arrived in Italy twenty years after its American release directly on home video) by the companies RKO Radio Pictures, Dear Film, Rome International Film, Rank Film, DCI, Cinema International Corporation (CIC), Universal International Pictures (UIP), Warner Bros, Buena Vista International, and Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. While the sample might be considered modest quantity-wise, it was still large enough to observe recurring patterns leading to significant results, as shown in Figure 1 below.

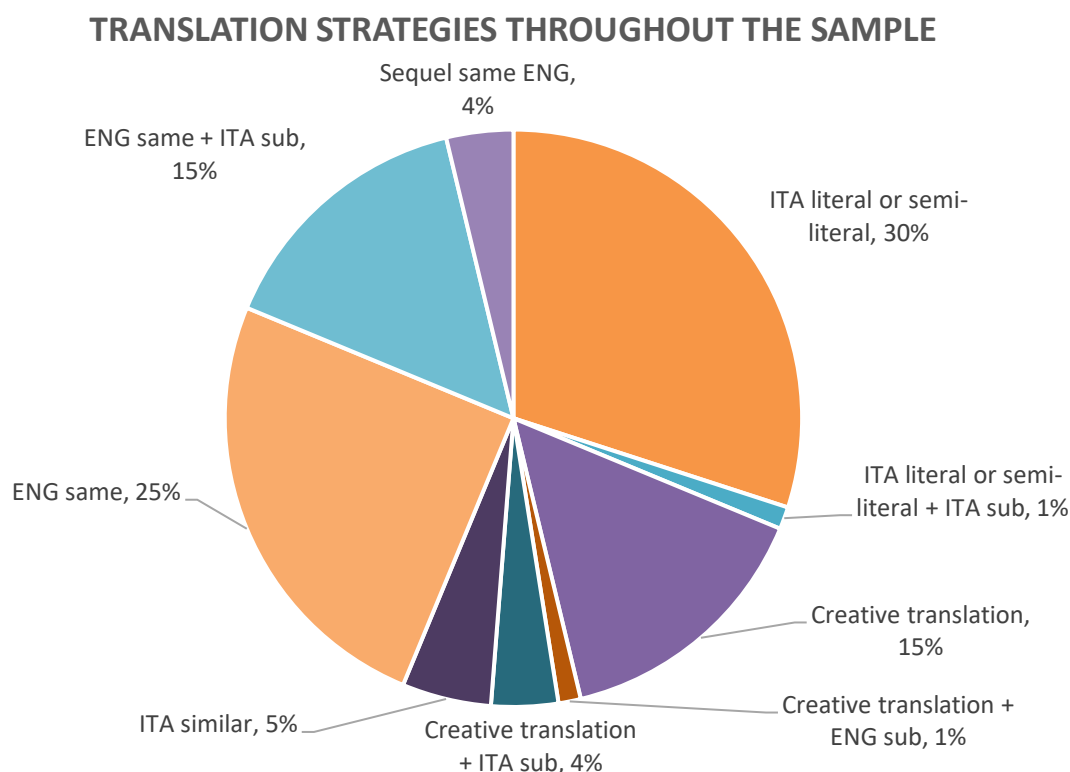


Figure 1. *Breakdown of translation strategies throughout the sample*

The choice to analyze the titles of animated children's movies has caught my interest for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the restricted target audience. Even though children and adults alike enjoy watching animated movies, the former remains the first and foremost age group those films are directed at. Disney films are among the highest-grossing in terms of box-office (*Frozen II* alone has a cumulative worldwide gross of \$1.450 billion, and it is second only to 2019's *The Lion King* remake, which earned \$1.656 billion)¹, therefore studying how translation tactics change according to their very young and broad target audience may provide a refreshing perspective on this field.

¹ Data taken from the Internet Movie Database. Please see the references section for a link to the website.

This is closely linked to the second point: the relationship between the Italian target audience and the source language of the titles. While one may argue that the need to translate titles into Italian has faded over time due to globalization and the ever-increasing exposure to English, mainly thanks to social media, that is not the case for this particular circumstance. The reason is quite simple: young Italian children do not know English (apart from the basic vocabulary and grammar learned at school), and thus a foreign title may be too off-putting, if not supported by an Italian subtitle, as we will see later.

This analysis is modeled after Bucaria's research on a corpus of comedy film titles in Italy (2020). She split her analysis into two sections: titles in English and titles in Italian. She then divided each category into sub-categories based on the translation tactics that were chosen. The names of the categories in this paper are also inspired by Bucaria's ones. The issues in this study will thus be tackled as follows:

- Titles in English
 - Same ENG title
 - Same ENG title + ITA subtitle
 - Sequel with only the ENG title
- Titles in ITA
 - Literal or semi-literal translation
 - Literal or semi-literal translation + ITA subtitle
 - Creative Translation
 - Creative Translation + ENG subtitle
 - Creative Translation + ITA subtitle
 - Similar to ENG but with ITA adaptation

It is important to note that the analysis is based upon the knowledge gathered by reading the texts in the bibliography and the personal critical thinking skills acquired in the degree program on Intercultural Linguistic Mediation and not on data learned directly by official sources (such as the distributing and marketing companies that operate in Italy). Thus, this paper can be considered a starting point for further research.

1.1 The importance of title translation for a young and foreign audience

If one surfs the Internet in search of information on film title translation in Italy, several articles listing the supposedly poorest translation choices will pop up. The Italian title of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, namely *Se mi lasci ti cancello* (“If you leave me, I’ll erase you”) always makes it at the top of the list. While one may argue that not all Italian movies boast a title that holds a candle to the original one, it is important to note that “the job of finding titles for film imports is normally done not by professional translators but by experts in marketing, distributing and advertising, in conjunction with executive managers”² (Ross, 2013: 248). Often, it is not only the film itself that determines the choice of a title translation, but also “the brand itself, target audience and global directions”³ (Özyiğit 2011). With this knowledge, it is easy to understand why the Italian division of the Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures distributor opted to change *Moana*’s title into *Oceania* (meaning “ocean,” but it is also the name of a continent). *Moana*, in fact, is the name of the famous Italian porn-star Moana Pozzi,

²This statement is referring to different pieces of research carried out by Doğan (2012), Gärtner and Schlatter (2001:85) and Bravo (2004:227).

³Based on the evidence that Ross (2013:258) gathered on interviews with employees of companies such as Disney Turkey and UIP Turkey.

therefore associating an animated children's movie, let alone Disney's, to that of a sex worker was obviously not an option.

If we look at the titles collected in this analysis, 24 (30%) of them have been literally or semi-literally translated into Italian, for a total of 45 Italian titles out of 80. As previously mentioned, the limited English knowledge of the target audience likely plays a big role in this choice, but there are more factors to support the thesis that translating titles is crucial when dealing with millions of potential young viewers.

One of these factors is the target culture. As stated by Christiane Nord, titles "are determined by literary conventions and intertextual relationships existing in a particular culture" (1995: 267). In her study of book titles and headings, Nord pinpointed six different features that make a title functional: distinctive, meta-textual, phatic, informative, expressive and appellative (1995: 269). She then identified three essential ones, one of which is the phatic function: "each title must be appropriate to attract the attention of its culture-specific audience and, if necessary, to be remembered over a certain period of time" (Nord, 1995: 269). An Italian title is likely going to be easier to remember for Italian children (who could also potentially spread the word about the movie with their friends) instead of an English one that has no meaning for them. On the same note, this also explains why a film titled *Moana* could make Italian parents who bring their children to the cinema opt to watch something else instead, resulting in a loss of revenue at the box-office.

Another interesting function that Nord identified is the appellative one, which she found out was the most frequent in children's books (1995: 272). The appellative function is the one that makes a book attractive in the eyes of the target culture's readers (Nord, 1995: 270). This function is probably the reason behind the choice to translate *The Black Cauldron* into *Taron*

e la Pentola Magica (“Taron and the magic cauldron”). A film that clearly states the protagonist’s name will likely attract more children. Moreover, the Italian title associates the cauldron with magic, rather than with blackness, making the movie sound less like a horror story and more like a fairy-tale in hopes of attracting its target audience.

A functional movie title, as Nord (1995) intended it, is therefore not only necessary but also crucial in order to sell the product to (foreign) markets. To understand why that is the case, we must look at Gérard Genette’s definition of paratexts:

the paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public. More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a threshold, [...] a ‘vestibule’ that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. (1997: 1-2)

Paratexts are all the “materials that surround a literary text” (Gray, 2010: 6). Titles are thus paratexts, or, more specifically, peritexts: elements of the paratext that exist more closely (e.g., in the same volume, on the front cover) to the source text (Genette, 1997: 4-5). As such, they are one of the first looks (together with the cover page and the appendages) that the public has into the contents of the book and provide valuable information (Genette, 1997: 23) that may draw the reader’s attention to it. However, it does not end here: paratexts can have a tangible form as well, as in the case of merchandise, posters, and videogames that surround a book, film, TV show, and so on (Gray, 2010: 6).

In this sense, Disney is a well overflowing with paratextuality. The public will know that a new Disney movie is on the way well before its release thanks to an extensive advertising campaign. This campaign may include “an army of plush toys, coloring books, watches, bedspreads, and action figures” as well as “a specially themed ‘Happy Meal’” (Gray, 2010: 38). Jonathan Gray eloquently puts into words how paratextuality works in the Disney universe:

Thus, the movie suggests fun and good things to children—it is associated with cuddly toys, playtime, good television shows, and sugary food. Meanwhile, of course, the average Disney marketing campaign so heavily populates the kid universe with film-related merchandise that any given child could understandably feel as though “everyone” is watching the film. Ultimately, then, when it works, Disney paratextuality creates a well-fashioned image of all that the film represents, and it exhorts the child to watch the film. (2010: 38)

Gray then identifies a category of “entryway paratexts” that includes titles, opening credits, promos, or trailers whose aim is to “grab the viewer before he or she reaches the text and try to control the viewer’s entrance to the text” (2010: 23). Since, in the case of Disney, the act of eating a themed burger or buying a toy becomes part of experiencing the movie itself (Gray, 2010: 38), an attractive title is essential to the film’s success, since it will likely be plastered everywhere a kid will be able to see it.

Despite the significance of promotional material in any shape and form, titles maintain the high ground in terms of longevity:

Titles seem to escape the risk of ephemerality as they continue to remain in the public conscience all the time that the films are in circulation (and even beyond that), and therefore they enjoy a much more permanent status than other forms of paratextual information (Bucaria, 2020: 95).

Toys will be sold out, clothing lines will fall out of fashion, children will grow up, but the title remains forever.

2. Titles in English

Out of all the 80 films collected in the sample, 35 have an English title. Although at first glance the number might seem quite high, a large portion of titles corresponds to the protagonist's name, which both languages share. Specifically, two main categories have been identified: movies that maintain the original English title, and movies that keep the original English title with the addition of an Italian subtitle.

2.1 Films with the same English title

Twenty titles (25%) fall under this category, 13 of which are a protagonist's name. The remaining ones have not been translated as the title corresponds to either an Italian word or to a short and simple English one, thus they are thought to be easily understood by the target audience without hindering the film's success (Bucaria, 2020: 100).

- (1) *Pinocchio* (Ferguson, Hee, Jackson, Kinney, Luske, Roberts, Sharpsteen 1940)
- (2) *Fantasia* (Algar, Armstrong, Ford Beebe, Ferguson, Hand, Handley, Hee, Jackson, Luske, Roberts, Satterfield, Sharpsteen 1940)
- (3) *Robin Hood* (Hand, Reitherman 1973)
- (4) *Mulan* (Bancroft, Cook 1998)
- (5) *Ratatouille* (Bird, Pinkava 2007)
- (6) *Up* (Docter, Peterson 2009)
- (7) *Big Hero 6* (Hall, Williams 2014)

All the titles that are not a main character's name can be easily understood by children anyway. There are identical Italian words as in 2, foreign words that belong to the Italian vocabulary and every-day, domestic usage such as 5, a short and easy English word as seen in 6, and a foreign sounding superhero name that is transparent and in line with the mostly English names

of children's beloved cartoon heroes. However, distributing a film with an English title in Italy is not guaranteed to be a successful strategy, therefore distributors think twice before doing so and analyze each case carefully (Bucaria, 2020: 101).

2.2 *Films with the same English title and an Italian subtitle*

When movies have an English title that does not belong to the basic vocabulary that almost all Italian people know, a subtitle in Italian is added. This is the case for 12 (15%) of the films in the corpus. Even though distributors usually rely on the younger audience's English knowledge (Bucaria, 2020: 99), they give young children a helping hand by adding an Italian subtitle that contains keywords or clues to understand the plot of the movie. Ross calls this strategy 'amplification', and he used it to describe "titles that are inherently more explicit and/or informative than their sources and do in fact offer the recipient a clearer idea of the content of the film" (2013: 252). The subtitle has both an advertising function and a persuasive function, which means that it aims to attract viewers and, at the same time, to guide their interpretation regarding what they are about to watch (Nord, 1995: 278). Italian viewers in particular need to be guided as they often do not plan what film to watch until they arrive at the cinema and trust the title, or subtitle, to guide them in their choice of movie (Bucaria, 2020: 102).

(8) <i>Dumbo</i> (Armstrong, Elliotte, Ferguson, Jackson, Kinney, Roberts, Sharpsteen 1941)	<i>Dumbo - L'elefante volante</i> [Dumbo - The Flying Elephant]
(9) <i>Chicken Little</i> (Dindal 2005)	<i>Chicken Little - Amici per le penne</i> [Chicken Little - Friends for feathers]
(10) <i>Bolt</i> (Howard, Williams 2008)	<i>Bolt - Un eroe a quattro zampe</i>

	[Bolt - A four-legged hero]
(11) <i>Frozen</i> (Buck, Lee 2013)	<i>Frozen - Il regno di ghiaccio</i> [Frozen - The ice kingdom]
(12) <i>Cars</i> (Lasseeter, Ranft 2006)	<i>Cars - Motori Ruggenti</i> [Cars - Roaring engines]
(13) <i>Onward</i> (Scanlon 2020)	<i>Onward - Oltre la magia</i> [Onward - Beyond magic]

In example 9, the subtitle *Amici per le penne*, which literally means “friends for feathers”, hints at the fact that the protagonist is a chicken. It is a play on words on the Italian idiom *amici per la pelle* (literally “friends for skin”, roughly translatable with ‘friends for life’, meaning that two people are very close friends), therefore by substituting the Italian element of “skin” with “feathers” the viewers will know that the movie has birds as protagonists. The same goes for 8 and 10, where the subtitle makes it clear that the heroes are an elephant and a dog respectively. In particular, in example 10, Italian viewers will know that the subtitle refers to a dog since it is a play on the expression *amico a quattro zampe*, which is a ‘four-legged friend’, and it is used mainly for dogs and cats.

The remaining three are all examples of subtitles that hint at particular elements of the plot in order to clarify it for young Italian viewers. “Frozen”, “car” and “onward” are rather obscure words for a child who has never studied English in their life or is just beginning to, and is, therefore, less likely to be interested in a movie that they would perceive as foreign. Furthermore “English titles could seriously hinder a film’s box office revenue if they happened to be too difficult to understand or even to pronounce (hence becoming an obstacle for word-of-mouth recommendation) for the target audience” (Bucaria, 2020: 99). That is why there are

often references to crucial plot points: in 11, the subtitle hints at the classical fairytale element of a mystical kingdom and pairs it with the Italian word for ‘ice’. In 12, young viewers obsessed with cars will be drawn to the movie thanks to the reference to an automobile’s roaring engine, and finally 13 provides a further connection to the element of magic by adding its Italian equivalent, *magia*, into the subtitle.

This leads us to another sub-category connected to the one that has just been presented. An example is the film *Cars - Motori ruggenti* that was previously discussed. Knowing that the subtitle’s purpose is to clarify that the movie is about cars, it is interesting to look at its sequels. While the first movie has a subtitle in the Italian adaptation, the two movies that came after, *Cars 2* and *Cars 3*, have none. The explanation for this circumstance is probably quite straightforward: having already familiarized themselves with the subject of the first movie, a title is enough for viewers to trigger the association between it and its sequels without further clarification.

Another example of this sub-category is the film *Toy Story 4*. The first three movies all had subtitles in the Italian adaptations:

(14) <i>Toy Story</i> (Lasseter, 1995)	<i>Toy Story – Il mondo dei giocattoli</i> [Toy Story – The world of toys]
(15) <i>Toy Story 2</i> (Brannon, Lasseter, Unkrich, 1999)	<i>Toy Story 2 – Woody e Buzz alla riscossa</i> [Toy Story 2 – Woody and Buzz’s comeback]
(16) <i>Toy Story 3</i> (Unkrich, 2010)	<i>Toy Story 3 – La grande fuga</i> [Toy Story 3 – The great escape]

All three subtitles hint at what will happen in the movie, possibly also to distinguish them from one another. Interestingly, *Toy Story 4* (that came out in 2019) does not have an Italian subtitle. This is likely due to the saga's worldwide success: the *Toy Story* films had become so iconic by 2019 that the title alone was enough to attract a broad, loyal audience.

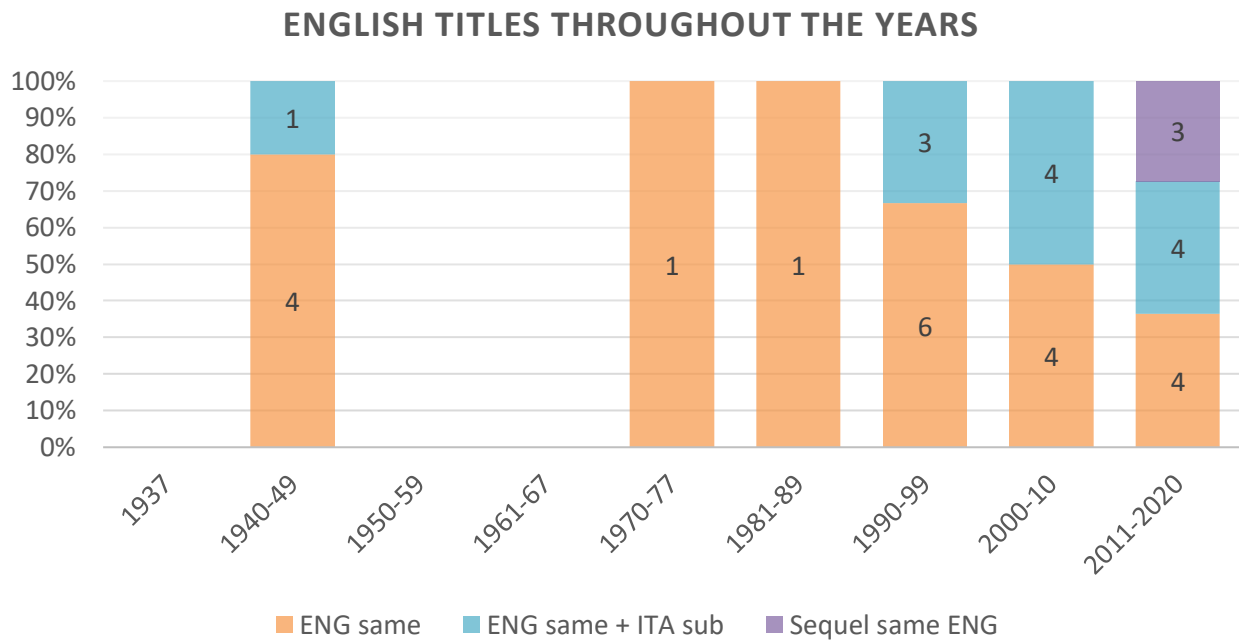


Figure 2. *The strategies for English titles throughout the years*

As shown in Figure 2, distributors rely on the same English title the most when choosing not to translate it, although this strategy declined over the years. It is important to note, however, that the original title is often a main character's name, and not an English word. English titles after the 1990s saw an increase of a more functional approach that entails helping viewers with an Italian subtitle. Sequels that maintain the original title appeared after 2011, as the previous movies of the *Toy Story* and *Cars* sagas came out years before. Overall, a functional approach remains the distributors' priority, as there is not a single English title that is hard to understand or obscure for Italian speakers.

3. *Titles in Italian*

This section includes 47 titles (58,7% of the whole sample) and exhibits a broader range of translation techniques. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the Disney movie titles in the corpus have been literally or semi-literally translated into Italian. The second highest-encompassing group is that of the titles that have been re-created. The next sections look more closely at the sub-categories.

3.1 *Literal or semi-literal translation*

In our corpus, 24 (30%) titles out of 80 have been literally or semi-literally translated into Italian. This indicates that distributors still rely quite heavily on this strategy when adapting titles for very young viewers.

(17) <i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (Cottrell, Hand, Jackson, Morey, Pearce, Sharpsteen, 1937)	<i>Biancaneve e i Sette Nani</i>
(18) <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Clark, Geronimi, Luske, Reitherman, 1959)	<i>La Bella Addormentata nel Bosco</i> [The Beauty Sleeping in the Wood]
(19) <i>The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh</i> (Lounsbery, Reitherman, Sharpsteen, 1977)	<i>Le Avventure di Winnie the Pooh</i> [the adjective “many” is missing]
(20) <i>Dinosaur</i> (Leighton, Zondag, 2000)	<i>Dinosauri</i> [Dinosaurs]
(21) <i>Brother Bear</i> (Blaise, Walker, 2003)	<i>Koda, fratello orso</i> [Koda, Brother Bear]

(22) <i>Finding Nemo</i> (Stanton, Unkrich, 2003)	<i>Alla ricerca di Nemo</i> [Looking for Nemo]
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All these examples show how distributors respected the target culture's language conventions when translating into Italian, with slight variations where necessary. Example 17 is a literal translation of the English title but with the Italian names of Snow White and of the Seven Dwarfs. In 18, the Italian title adds a small hint about the plot and general setting of the film by revealing that the Beauty is sleeping in the woods. The singular *Dinosaur* of 20 becomes plural in Italian, as it sounds more natural in the target language, and it has the advantage of referring to all the dinosaurs in the movie. Finally, 21 is another example of a title that states a protagonist's name, which is probably also a marketing strategy: by showing the name of the little bear in the title, children will retain its name better and possibly be more prone to buying (or asking their parents to buy) a product that depicts what they will recognize as the hero of the movie.

I have kept 19 and 22 for last, because they are examples of recurring words and phrases that function as genre-marking. As stated by Nord regarding the phatic function of a title, it also “depends [o]n its length and its mnemonic quality, which is often strengthened by the use of familiar title patterns or other forms of intertextuality” (1995: 275). A familiar pattern in the case of Italian children's movies and cartoons is the phrase *le avventure di* (‘the adventures of’) or simply the word *avventure* (‘adventure’). This phrase appears in example 19, where *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* simply becomes *Le Avventure di Winnie the Pooh* (‘The Adventures of Winnie the Pooh’), with the adjective ‘many’ being absent to better fit the Italian standard. This kind of pattern appears in four more films in our corpus. Note that ‘the adventures of’ does not always appear in the original title:

(23) <i>The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad</i> (Algar, Geronimi, Kinney, 1949)	<i>Le Avventure di Ichabod e Mr. Toad</i>
(24) <i>Peter Pan</i> (Geronimi, Jackson, Luske, Kinney, 1953)	<i>Le Avventure di Peter Pan</i>
(25) <i>The Rescuers</i> (Lounsbery, Reitherman, Stevens, 1977)	<i>Le Avventure di Bianca e Bernie</i>
(26) <i>Winnie the Pooh</i> (Anderson, Hall, 2011)	<i>Winnie the Pooh - Nuove avventure nel Bosco dei Cento Acri</i> [Winnie the Pooh – New Adventures in The Hundred Acre Wood]

The Italian title of *Finding Nemo*, *Alla Ricerca di Nemo* (‘Looking for Nemo’), could very well be an example of intertextuality, that is “the inclusion of more or less explicit allusions to previous film titles” (Bucaria, 2020: 107). A few years before *Finding Nemo* came out, the animated movie *The Land Before Time* by Don Bluth made its debut in Italy, in 1989. The film, distributed by Universal Pictures, was so well-received that it spawned many sequels and a plethora of merchandise centered around the baby dinosaurs that every child came to love. In Italian, the title of this lucky series is *Alla Ricerca della Valle Incantata* (‘Looking for the Enchanted Valley’), thus it is likely that the Italian distributors for *Finding Nemo* wanted to reference the successful animated dinosaur movie.

Only one title in the corpus was literally translated and has an Italian subtitle, making this one of the less popular adaptation choices.

(27) <i>The Incredibles</i> (Bird 2004)	<i>Gli Incredibili – Una “normale” famiglia di supereroi</i> [The Incredibles – a “normal” family of superheroes]
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3.2 Creative Translation

There are 12 films out of 80 (15%) whose title is the result of a creative translation in our corpus. Creative translation means that the original title was not literally or semi-literally translated, but rather created anew. When referring to this strategy in her research, Bucaria named this process re-creation, as “the titles resulting from this process should be intended as a reinterpretation of the spirit of the film and are only partially based on the original title” (2020: 104). This happens because when choosing a title, distributors favor a functional approach rather than a literal translation that could make them lose potential viewers (Bucaria, 2020: 104). Here are some examples:

(28) <i>The Black Cauldron</i> (Berman, Rich, 1985)	<i>Taron e la Pentola Magica</i> [Taron and the Magic Cauldron]
(29) <i>Fun and Fancy Free</i> (Kinney, Luske, Morgan, Roberts, 1947)	<i>Bongo e i Tre Avventurieri</i> [Bongo and the Three Adventurers]
(30) <i>The Rescuers Down Under</i> (Butoy, Gabriel, 1990)	<i>Bianca e Bernie nella Terra dei Canguri</i> [Bianca and Bernie in the Land of Kangaroos]
(31) <i>Moana</i> (Clements, Musker, Hall, Williams, 2016)	<i>Oceania</i>

(32) <i>The Good Dinosaur</i> (Sohn, 2015)	<i>Il Viaggio di Arlo</i> [Arlo's Journey]
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These are all good examples of how creative translation in titles tends to guide the viewer towards a specific interpretation. Ross had encountered similar trends in the corpus he analyzed and deducted that “these creative renditions serve to transform an original title that provides little information about the film into a title that presents the genre and basic story-line on a plate” (2013: 256). This is the case for 28, 29 and 32. Example 28 has already been discussed in part, yet it is important to stress how the title functions as genre-marking by showcasing the protagonist's name and by describing the cauldron as magic, and not as black, so as not to risk scaring children away. *Fun and Fancy Free* (29) is split into two different stories and was distributed in Italy with the names of the lead characters of the two segments, namely the bear Bongo and the three adventurers (none other than the beloved Mickey, Donald and Goofy). The vague original title of 32 was translated into Italian in a way that neatly summarizes the plot, which revolves around the journey towards adulthood of the dinosaur Arlo.

The Italian title of *The Rescuers Down Under* (30) is an example of what Ross defines an ‘obligatory amplification’, and it happens when “the original title refers to a person, object, phenomenon or text probably familiar to members of the source culture but less likely to be known among the target audience, so that the latter would have difficulty understanding a literal translation or the retention of the original title” (2013: 256). The heroes of the movie, Bianca and Bernie, embark on a new adventure in Australia. An English-speaking person will know where this new journey takes place because ‘down-under’ is a colloquialism that indicates either Australia or New Zealand. In order to replicate the same reference in Italian, the distributors at Warner Bros translated the original title into *Bianca e Bernie nella Terra dei*

Canguri ('*Bianca and Bernie in the Land of Kangaroos*'), so as to trigger the connection between Australia and Kangaroos, two elements that are definitely easier for Italian people to connect to each other.

Lastly, *Moana*'s (31) case can be examined with the help of Nord's expressive function. According to Nord, "any evaluations or emotions expressed in the title have to be judged in relation to the value system of the culture in question" (1995: 269), which means that the translated title must evoke the same evaluations as the original one according to the value system of the target audience (Nord, 1995: 270). Obviously, as stated in the introduction of this paper, the name Moana has different connotations in Italian. Since Moana was the name of a famous Italian porn star, maintaining the original title would have meant creating a new, negative evaluation of the movie that neither the distributors nor the Walt Disney Company could have afforded. Therefore, distributors changed the title into *Oceania* (a word that is similar to 'ocean', and it is also the name of a continent in the Southern Hemisphere), whereas the heroine's name became Vaiana, from the Hawaiian words *vai*, water, and *ana*, cave. Moana is thus a perfect example of the importance of the target-culture when translating movie titles.

3.3 Creative Translation plus an English or an Italian subtitle

Rarely does a title that underwent a creative translation have a subtitle. With only one film with an English subtitle (36) and three with an Italian one (33, 34, and 35), this strategy joins the literal or semi-literal translation with a subtitle group as one of the less popular. As these two strategies are closely linked, they will be analyzed together in this section.

(33) <i>The Fox and the Hound</i> (Berman, Hand, Reitherman, Rich, Stevens, 1981)	<i>Red e Toby – Nemiciamici</i> [Red and Toby – Frenemies]
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(34) <i>Meet the Robinsons</i> (Anderson, 2007)	<i>I Robinson – Una famiglia spaziale</i> [The Robinsons – a “galactic” family]
(35) <i>Tangled</i> (Greno, Howard, 2010)	<i>Rapunzel – l’intreccio della torre</i> [Rapunzel – the “tangle” of the tower]
(36) <i>Brave</i> (Andrews, Chapman, Purcell, 2012)	<i>Ribelle – The Brave</i> [Rebel – The Brave]

All four Italian titles and their respective subtitles follow the path of trying to make the contents of the movie as clear as possible. In 33, the generic English title becomes more specific in Italian by adding the names of the two animals and the relationship they share in the subtitle. Italian viewers get a glimpse into the dynamic of the peculiar Robinsons (34) family thanks to the adjective *spaziale* (“a space family”), whereas the Italian translation of *Brave* (36) reveals the heroine’s most prominent character trait by making it the main title, *ribelle* (meaning ‘rebel’) while keeping the original title as a subtitle. In 35, the distributors changed *Tangled* into *Rapunzel*, again, the Disney princess’ name, and kept the reference to the original title in the subtitle: the word *intreccio* (‘tangle’) has to do with hair, and together with the reference to a tower the Italian audience will undoubtedly associate the film with the heroine of the popular Grimm fairytale.

3.4 Titles similar to English but with an Italian adaptation

This section encompasses titles that cannot be properly considered a translation, but rather an adaptation that remains close to the original title while managing to sound Italian. In our sample, 4 titles (5%) belong to this category.

(37) <i>Peter Pan</i> (Geronimi, Jackson, Luske, Kinney, 1953)	<i>Le Avventure di Peter Pan</i>
(38) <i>The Aristocats</i> (Reitherman, 1970)	<i>Gli Aristogatti</i>
(39) <i>Zootopia</i> (Howard, Moore, Bush, 2016)	<i>Zootropolis</i>
(40) <i>Monsters, Inc.</i> (Docter, Silverman, Unkrich, 2001)	<i>Monsters & Co.</i>

The translation of these titles exhibits once again the care and attention put when considering the target culture. Example 37 has already been discussed in part, yet it was added into this category because it was adapted into Italian by adding the popular phrase *le avventure di* ('the adventures of') as genre-marker. The play on words in *The Aristocats* (38) is identical in the Italian version, *Gli Aristogatti*, where 'cats' was replaced with its Italian equivalent, *gatti*. A similar strategy was used for the adaptation of *Zootopia* (39). The original title is a combination of the words 'zoo' (as all the characters are anthropomorphic animals) and 'utopia' (because the film is set in a futuristic city inhabited by said anthropomorphic animals). The Italian title replicates a similar combination by mixing 'zoo' with 'metropolis' to convey the same idea of the English title.

Monsters, Inc.'s (40) Italian title underwent a minor change, namely the final *& Co.* instead of *Inc.* Without delving too deep into business jargon, 'inc.' is the abbreviation for 'incorporated' that comes after the name of a company in the USA⁴ that has been officially recognized as a corporation (Sember 2017). If a company has '& Co.' after its name, it does not necessarily mean that it has been incorporated (ibid.). Alternatively, and much more commonly for Italian speakers, '& Co.' can also indicate a group of people, and it is usually put after the name of

⁴ Definition taken from the Oxford Dictionary. Please see the reference section for a link to the website.

one of its participants, e. g. Emily & Co. This is probably the result that the distributors wanted to achieve: a title that looked business-related while also sounding Italian. Let us not forget that another film in the sample has a similar title: *Oliver & Company*, which is identical both in English and Italian.

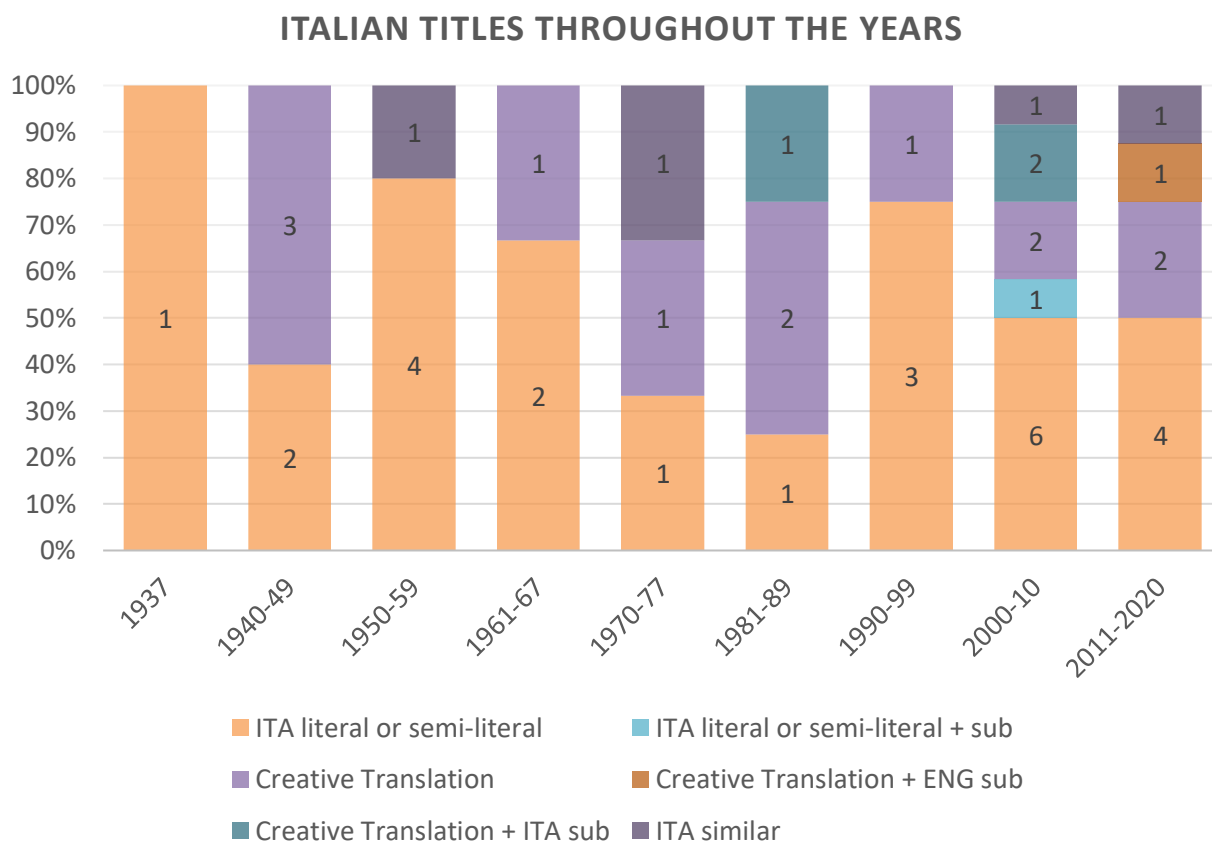


Figure 3. *Strategies for Italian titles throughout the years*

As Figure 3 illustrates, Italian literal or semi-literal translations are the most prominent among Italian titles throughout the years. The second highest dominant tactic is creative translation, which saw an increase in the years between 1940 and 1949, and in the year span between 1981 and 1989. Distributors seem to opt for a similar Italian title whenever there is the possibility and the need to, regardless of the time period. Lastly, subtitles were introduced after 1981, and their relatively scarce numbers in comparison with the other categories highlights that distributors deem that often an Italian title is enough.

4. Concluding Remarks

Little but valuable information about title translation has been gathered thanks to the research of Ross and Bucaria, with which the findings in this paper share some similarities. In order to discern patterns in the translation of originally English titles, Ross analyzed a sample of 390 films distributed within Slovenia and Turkey in 2009 (2013: 250), whereas Bucaria's sample included 798 comedy films imported in Italy between the years 2009-2018 (2020: 99). Cross-referencing the findings of these papers with the research on this one revealed that the main focus of distributors is the target audience, and consequently the target culture. This focus is the main reason behind the re-creation or the changing of culture-specific elements in titles, although all the strategies presented in this paper support this claim.

Further research has cemented the study of title translation. Nord's focus on book title functions highlights how there is more than meets the eye when choosing a proper heading for a book or film. If the author wants their product to be sold, then they must consider creating (or translating) a title that distinguishes that work from others, and that remains in the public's memory for a long time. Furthermore, a title must appeal to the target audience and recreate the same evaluation that it originally had (Nord, 1995: 269).

Moreover, titles are paratexts. Genette intended them as a threshold across a written text (1997: 1-2), although the definition has evolved today to include all the material such as merchandise, posters, toys and the like that are part of experiencing a book or film (Gray, 2010: 6). Disney heavily relies on paratexts to promote their movies. Titles are therefore of great importance to them, since they also serve as a tool to promote that year's Disney Princess doll, for example. Titles also have the benefit of longevity: they surpass material merchandise, as people will remember a movie primarily thanks to its title (if it was functional enough), whereas merchandise is ephemeral (Bucaria, 2020: 95).

The research carried out on the sample presented in this paper yielded significant results. A breakdown of the translation strategies (Figure 1) revealed that the distributors' first choice is to literally or semi-literally translate the originally English title into Italian (30% of our sample). The same English title is retained when it is either the main character's name (which is the same as in Italian) or when it is a short and simple English word. With 25% frequency, this is the second most popular tactic in the sample. Two different categories both came third place for most employed strategy: the same English title with an Italian subtitle, and creative translation, both at 15%. This shows how the distributor's first concern is the very young target audience, for which they try to make the title as appealing and understandable as possible while maintaining a reference to the source material for promotional reasons.

The remaining strategies have relatively low percentages in comparison with the ones that have just been mentioned. A film is distributed with an Italian title similar to the original one if minor changes are applicable, such as adapted plays on words or cultural elements. In our sample, 5% of titles were distributed with similar Italian titles. The sequels to famous film sagas that retain the original title without subtitles comprise 4% of our corpus. Subtitles after Italian titles are uncommon. Only 4% of titles that underwent a creative translation have an Italian subtitle, whereas 1% alone have an English one. Lastly, only one title (1%) is a literal or semi-literal translation into Italian and has an Italian subtitle.

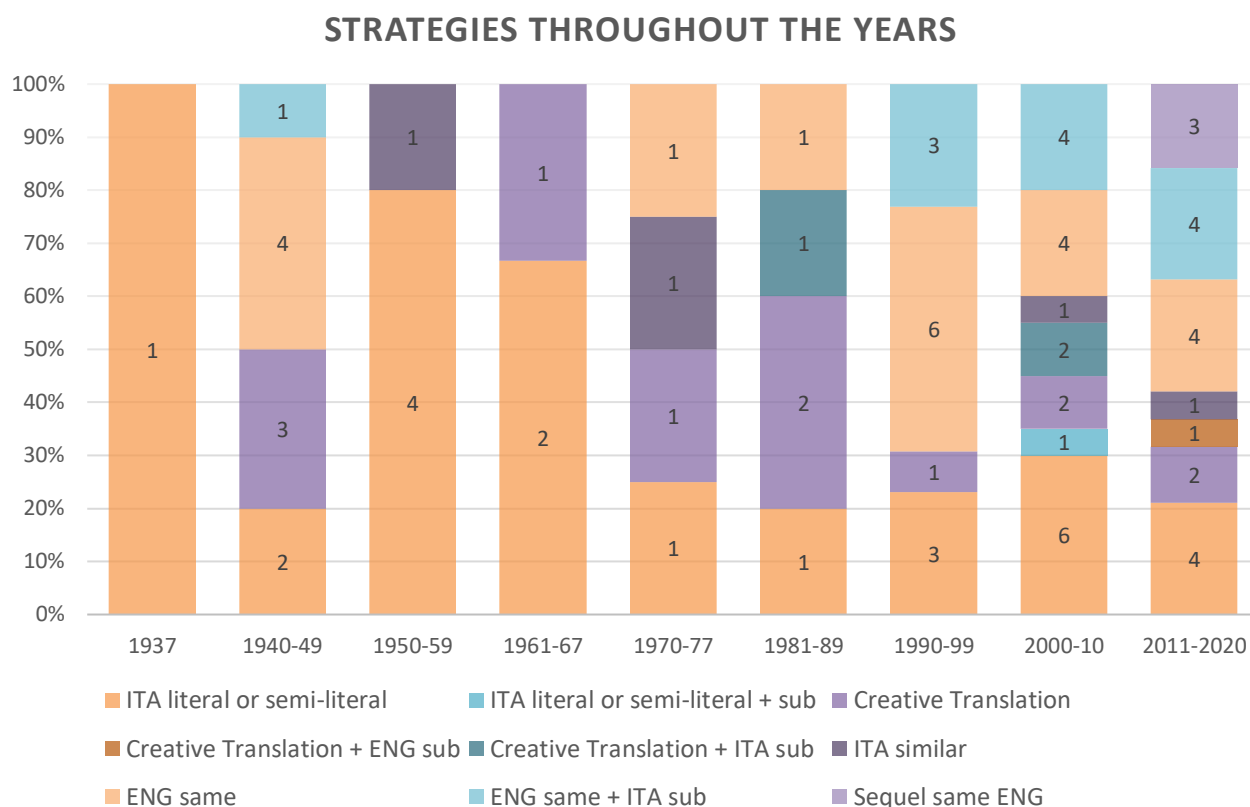


Figure 4. *Breakdown of all the strategies in the sample throughout the years*

As figure 4 illustrates, a wider variety of tactics has been adopted in the last two decades. This shows how distributors have become more confident in maintaining references to the source material by sticking to the original English title with the due precautions, although literally or semi-literally translating into Italian seems to remain the go-to tactic. However, when compared with the previous decades, it becomes evident how distributors seem less scared of strategies that entail English words, even when the target audience likely has little to no familiarity with English. Globalization is slowly but surely making an impact in the industry. There is still much to learn about title translation. It would not be wrong to say that this area of study has been underestimated, likely because titles attract less attention than material elements when conducting research in the movie industry. They are, however, of great importance as they are the first contact the public has with a book or film and they have the great power and

responsibility to attract readers and viewers. With this in mind, this research is merely a starting point for further investigation that perhaps can delve deeper into the workings of the distributing industry in Italy to discover what lays behind the titles of the most beloved films of all time.

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Filmography

Original title	Italian version	Director(s)	Year
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	<i>Biancaneve e i sette nani</i>	William Cottrell, David Hand, Wilfred Jackson, Larry Morey, Perce Pearce, Ben Sharpsteen	1937
<i>Pinocchio</i>	<i>Pinocchio</i>	Norman Ferguson, T. Hee, Wilfred Jackson, Jack Kinney, Hamilton Luske, Bill Roberts, Ben Sharpsteen	1940
<i>Fantasia</i>	<i>Fantasia</i>	James Algar, Samuel Armstrong, Ford Beebe Jr., Norman Ferguson, David Hand, Jim Handley, T. Hee, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, Bill Roberts, Paul Satterfield, Ben Sharpsteen	1940
<i>Dumbo</i>	<i>Dumbo - L'elefante volante</i>	Samuel Armstrong, Norman Ferguson, Wilfred Jackson, Jack Kinney, Bill Roberts, Ben Sharpsteen, John Elliotte	1941
<i>Bambi</i>	<i>Bambi</i>	James Algar, Samuel Armstrong, David Hand, Graham Heid, Bill Roberts, Paul Satterfield, Norman Wright, Arthur Davis, Clyde Geronimi	1942
<i>Saludos Amigos</i>	<i>Saludos Amigos</i>	Wilfred Jackson, Jack Kinney, Hamilton Luske, Bill Roberts, Norman Ferguson	1942
<i>The Three Caballeros</i>	<i>I tre caballeros</i>	Norman Ferguson, Clyde Geronimi, Jack Kinney, Bill Roberts, Harold Young	1944
<i>Make Mine Music</i>	<i>Musica maestro!</i>	Robert Cormack, Clyde Geronimi, Jack Kinney, Hamilton	1946

		Luske, Joshua Meador	
<i>Fun and Fancy Free</i>	<i>Bongo e i tre avventurieri</i>	Jack Kinney, Hamilton Luske, William Morgan, Bill Roberts	1947
<i>Melody Time</i>	<i>Lo scrigno delle sette perle</i>	Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Jack Kinney, Hamilton Luske	1948
<i>The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad</i>	<i>Le avventure di Ichabod e Mr. Toad</i>	James Algar, Clyde Geronimi, Jack Kinney	1949
<i>Cinderella</i>	<i>Cenerentola</i>	Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske	1950
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	<i>Alice nel Paese delle Meraviglie</i>	Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, Jack Kinney	1951
<i>Peter Pan</i>	<i>Le avventure di Peter Pan</i>	Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, Jack Kinney	1953
<i>Lady and the Tramp</i>	<i>Lilli e il vagabondo</i>	Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske	1955
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	<i>La bella addormentata nel bosco</i>	Clyde Geronimi, Les Clark, Hamilton Luske, Wolfgang Reitherman	1959
<i>One Hundred and One Dalmatians</i>	<i>La carica dei cento e uno</i>	Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske, Wolfgang Reitherman	1961
<i>The Sword in the Stone</i>	<i>La spada nella roccia</i>	Wolfgang Reitherman, Clyde Geronimi, David Hand	1963
<i>The Jungle Book</i>	<i>Il libro della giungla</i>	Wolfgang Reitherman, James Algar, Jack Kinney	1967
<i>The Aristocats</i>	<i>Gli Aristogatti</i>	Wolfgang Reitherman	1970
<i>Robin Hood</i>	<i>Robin Hood</i>	Wolfgang Reitherman, David Hand	1973

<i>The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh</i>	<i>Le avventure di Winnie the Pooh</i>	John Lounsbery, Wolfgang Reitherman, Ben Sharpsteen	1977
<i>The Rescuers</i>	<i>Le avventure di Bianca e Bernie</i>	John Lounsbery, Wolfgang Reitherman, Art Stevens	1977
<i>The Fox and the Hound</i>	<i>Red e Toby - Nemiciamici</i>	Ted Berman, Richard Rich, Art Stevens, David Hand, Wolfgang Reitherman	1981
<i>The Black Cauldron</i>	<i>Taron e la pentola magica</i>	Ted Berman, Richard Rich	1985
<i>The Great Mouse Detective</i>	<i>Basil l'investigatopo</i>	Ron Clements, Burny Mattinson, David Michener, John Musker	1986
<i>Oliver & Company</i>	<i>Oliver & Company</i>	George Scribner	1988
<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	<i>La sirenetta</i>	Ron Clements, John Musker	1989
<i>The Rescuers Down Under</i>	<i>Bianca e Bernie nella terra dei canguri</i>	Hendel Butoy, Mike Gabriel	1990
<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	<i>La bella e la bestia</i>	Gary Trousdale, Kirk Wise	1991
<i>Aladdin</i>	<i>Aladdin</i>	Ron Clements, John Musker	1992
<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Il re leone</i>	Roger Allers, Rob Minkoff	1994
<i>Toy Story</i>	<i>Toy Story – Il mondo dei giocattoli</i>	John Lasseter	1995
<i>Pocahontas</i>	<i>Pocahontas</i>	Mike Gabriel, Eric Goldberg	1995
<i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>	<i>Il gobbo di Notre Dame</i>	Gary Trousdale, Kirk Wise	1996
<i>Hercules</i>	<i>Hercules</i>	Ron Clements, John Musker	1997
<i>A Bug's Life</i>	<i>A Bug's Life – Megaminimondo</i>	John Lasseter	1998
<i>Mulan</i>	<i>Mulan</i>	Tony Bancroft, Barry Cook	1998
<i>Toy Story 2</i>	<i>Toy Story 2 – Woody e Buzz alla riscossa</i>	John Lasseter	1999
<i>Tarzan</i>	<i>Tarzan</i>	Chris Buck, Kevin Lima	1999
<i>Fantasia 2000</i>	<i>Fantasia 2000</i>	James Algar, Gaëtan Brizzi, Paul Brizzi, Hendel Butoy,	1999

		Francis Glebas, Eric Goldberg, Don Hahn, Pixote Hunt	
<i>Dinosaur</i>	<i>Dinosauri</i>	Eric Leighton, Ralph Zondag	2000
<i>The Emperor's New Groove</i>	<i>Le follie dell'imperatore</i>	Mark Dindal	2000
<i>Monsters, Inc.</i>	<i>Monsters & Co.</i>	Pete Docter	2001
<i>Atlantis: The Lost Empire</i>	<i>Atlantis – L'impero perduto</i>	Gary Trousdale, Kirk Wise	2001
<i>Lilo & Stitch</i>	<i>Lilo & Stitch</i>	Dean DeBlois, Chris Sanders	2002
<i>Treasure Planet</i>	<i>Il pianeta del tesoro</i>	Ron Clements, John Musker	2002
<i>Brother Bear</i>	<i>Koda, fratello orso</i>	Aaron Blaise, Robert Walker	2003
<i>Finding Nemo</i>	<i>Alla ricerca di Nemo</i>	Andrew Stanton, Lee Unkrich	2003
<i>Home on the Range</i>	<i>Mucche alla riscossa</i>	Will Finn, John Sanford	2004
<i>The Incredibles</i>	<i>Gli Incredibili – Una 'normale' famiglia di supereroi</i>	Brad Bird	2004
<i>Chicken Little</i>	<i>Chicken Little – Amici per le penne</i>	Mark Dindal	2005
<i>Cars</i>	<i>Cars – Motori ruggenti</i>	John Lasseter, Joe Ranft	2006
<i>Meet the Robinsons</i>	<i>I Robinson – Una famiglia spaziale</i>	Stephen J. Anderson	2007
<i>Ratatouille</i>	<i>Ratatouille</i>	Brad Bird, Jan Pinkava	2007
<i>Bolt</i>	<i>Bolt – Un eroe a quattro zampe</i>	Byron Howard, Chris Williams	2008
<i>WALL·E</i>	<i>WALL·E</i>	Andrew Stanton	2008
<i>The Princess and the Frog</i>	<i>La principessa e il ranocchio</i>	Ron Clements, John Musker	2009
<i>Up</i>	<i>Up</i>	Pete Docter, Bob Peterson	2009
<i>Toy Story 3</i>	<i>Toy Story 3 – La grande fuga</i>	Lee Unkrich	2010
<i>Tangled</i>	<i>Rapunzel – L'intreccio della torre</i>	Nathan Greno, Byron Howard	2010
<i>Winnie the Pooh</i>	<i>Winnie the Pooh – Nuove avventure nel Bosco dei 100 Acri</i>	Stephen J. Anderson, Don Hall	2011
<i>Cars 2</i>	<i>Cars 2</i>	John Lasseter, Bradford Lewis	2011

<i>Brave</i>	<i>Ribelle – The Brave</i>	Mark Andrews Brenda Chapman Steve Purcell	2012
<i>Wreck-It Ralph</i>	<i>Ralph Spaccatutto</i>	Rich Moore	2012
<i>Monsters University</i>	<i>Monsters University</i>	Dan Scanlon	2013
<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Frozen – Il regno di ghiaccio</i>	Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee	2013
<i>Big Hero 6</i>	<i>Big Hero 6</i>	Don Hall, Chris Williams	2014
<i>Inside Out</i>	<i>Inside Out</i>	Pete Docter, Ronnie Del Carmen	2015
<i>Zootopia</i>	<i>Zootropolis</i>	Byron Howard, Rich Moore, Jared Bush	2016
<i>Finding Dory</i>	<i>Alla ricerca di Dory</i>	Andrew Stanton, Angus MacLane	2016
<i>Moana</i>	<i>Oceania</i>	Ron Clements, John Musker, Don Hall, Chris Williams	2016
<i>Cars 3</i>	<i>Cars 3</i>	Brian Fee	2017
<i>Coco</i>	<i>Coco</i>	Lee Unkrich, Adrian Molina	2017
<i>Ralph Breaks the Internet</i>	<i>Ralph spacca Internet</i>	Phil Johnston, Rich Moore	2018
<i>Incredibles 2</i>	<i>Gli Incredibili 2</i>	Brad Bird	2018
<i>Toy Story 4</i>	<i>Toy Story 4</i>	Josh Cooley	2019
<i>Frozen II</i>	<i>Frozen II – Il segreto di Arendelle</i>	Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee	2019
<i>Onward</i>	<i>Onward – Oltre la magia</i>	Dan Scanlon	2020